



SENATOR  
**BILL HARDIMAN**

***E-Hardiman Herald***



*Chair, Families & Human  
Services Committee  
Appropriations Committee:  
Chair, Family Independence  
Agency, Commerce Labor  
& Economic Development,  
Capitol Outlay,  
Higher Education*

## **HARDIMAN HERALD - DECEMBER**

### **WELFARE REFORM LEGISLATION HEADS TO THE GOVERNOR**

Sen. Bill Hardiman pledged his continued effort to improve Michigan's welfare policy and expand opportunities for the state's neediest, as reform legislation passed the Legislature on Tuesday.

"Our proposal for improving Michigan's welfare laws came after listening to clients, educators, job providers and front-line caseworkers," said Hardiman, who co-chaired a bipartisan, bicameral legislative welfare work group. "We're taking a new approach to welfare reform with an increased focus on job training and educational opportunities."

After the initial welfare reform legislation under Gov. Engler, Michigan saw its caseloads drop from about 240,000 to around 77,000. Those remaining on welfare need intensive assistance including education, job training and related programs to become independent, especially given the state's economy.

"I've been poor before, and I believe that people on welfare don't want to be on welfare," Hardiman said. "We have to break the cycle of dependency."

Hardiman's part of the welfare package is Senate Bill 892, which increases education and training opportunities. It would improve communication between agencies to work together and serve welfare recipients and work with them to develop plans to become independent.

"I remain hopeful that the research and dialogue about these bills ultimately will lead to better welfare policies and better outcomes for those needing assistance," Hardiman said.

The legislative package also would strengthen accountability for people abusing the welfare system after lawmakers heard directly from front-line caseworkers. The legislation also improves accountability measures for state departments to ensure long-term welfare recipients are identified and efforts focused on them.

The three bills are SBs 892-894. This package has been approved by both the House and Senate and now goes before the Governor for consideration.

## **GOVERNOR SIGNS SENATE BILL 88 INTO LAW**

Lansing, Senator Bill Hardiman (R-Kentwood) applauded Governor Granholm for signing Senate Bill 88 into law. SB 88 allows flexibilities costs for co-payments, coinsurance, and deductibles for enrollees of health maintenance organizations.

“I hope this law will help employers keep health coverage for workers and not increase reliance on state taxpayers for expensive care such as emergency rooms for routine visits”, Hardiman stated.

SB88 also changes state law to allow HMO’s to offer products or services promoting health styles to current enrollees.

Hardiman went on to say, “I am hopeful this will encourage more innovation to help people and make good choices for their own health and fitness.

SB 88 takes effect immediately.

## **HOLIDAY IDENTITY THEFT**

Thousands of Americans fall victim to Identity Theft during the holiday season. With your Social Security or credit card number, a criminal can easily steal your identity. During the holidays and year round, take these steps to protect yourself.

- Tear or shred anything with your Social Security or credit card numbers before you throw it away.
- When shopping on the Internet, be sure the company uses secure ordering methods.
- And finally, check you credit report each year to be sure it’s accurate - make it a New Year’s resolution.

## **TOP TEN WINTER PET CARE TIPS** (Tips provided by Dr. Wendy Swift DVM of the Kent County Humane Society)

**10.** Frostbite can affect pets too. Remove all ice, snow, salt, and mud from your pet’s fur and feet as soon as possible.

**9.** Antifreeze smells wonderful to pets and tastes even better. A very small amount can be fatal. Never dispose of antifreeze where animals can be exposed to it. It is even better to use a non-toxic brand that is completely safe for animals.

**8.** Holiday paraphernalia such as electrical cords, tinsel, glass ornaments, candles, ribbons, gift wrap, and spray on snow can be harmful to your pets. Monitor your pet’s activities closely to avoid any dangerous situations.

**7.** Various poisonous plants (Christmas rose, holly, mistletoe, philodendron, dieffenbachia, lilies and poinsettias) are present in your home during the holidays. Pets should not be allowed to consume any part of these types of plants.

**6.** Holiday cuisine can also be harmful to your pets. Do not allow your pet to consume your leftovers or table scraps. A regular diet should be maintained so problems such as pancreatitis,

chocolate toxicity, and foreign body obstruction (chicken/turkey bones in the intestinal tract), and alcohol consumption can be avoided.

5. Due to decreased water intake, the winter season is a common time for pets to develop bladder infections. Male cats also become blocked more often in the winter months. Watch for accidents in the home or changes in urination patterns.

4. Cold weather requires pets to burn more calories to stay warm. Make sure you provide extra food for your pet if they will be more active than normal.

3. Indoor pets should be provided with a warm draft free place to stay. An elevated bed will definitely help the older pets that have arthritis and are extremely affected by the cold weather.

2. Clean fresh water should always be provided for your pet. If you have a water source outside for your pet, check it often for ice formation. Remember heated water bowls can be an electrocution hazard for your pet.

1. If your pet lives outside during the cold weather months, they should have a warm and dry shelter that contains insulated bedding. All pets should be brought into the house if the weather conditions are rainy, snowy, or temperatures are cold.

## **HOLIDAY DRIVING**

As we approach the holiday season, please remember to not drink and drive. Keep yourself, your family, and other families safe this holiday season.

During the holidays it's easy to have too much to drink at parties. But remember that the only one who loses when you drink and drive is you. Help keep everyone safe by handing your car keys over if you've had too much to drink. Don't risk your life or the lives of others by driving drunk.

**Play it safe this holiday season: don't drink and drive.**

## **HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

I hope you are all enjoying a wonderful holiday season with family and friends. Despite all the snow and cold weather, Christmas is one of my favorite times of the year; however, there is something invigorating about the New Year: A fresh start. I wish you all a very blessed Christmas and hope you all enjoy the holiday season.

## **SENATOR HARDIMAN DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS**

Senator Hardiman will be holding monthly district office hours the first Monday of each month from 10:00am - 11:30am throughout the 29th district. Be sure to talk to the Senator at these upcoming office hours:

**Monday, January 9, 2006, Red Hot Inn, 3175 Leonard St. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525**  
**Monday, February 6, 2006, Beaners Gourmet Coffee, 2739 Breton, Suite B., Grand Rapids, MI 49546**

Senator Hardiman will hold this time each month so constituents of the 29th district have an opportunity to speak to him about any questions or concerns they may have regarding state issues. You can also contact Senator Hardiman via his toll-free number: 1-866-305-2129 or visit Senator Hardiman's homepage to set-up a meeting outside of the district hours, [www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hardiman](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hardiman)

Senator Hardiman will have a cell phone collection box available with him when he holds District Office Hours. Again, this donation will go to the victims of domestic violence. If you have a cell phone to donate, please stop by district office hours. Together we can help the victims of domestic violence, one step at a time

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Hardiman Herald is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of Senator Bill Hardiman's activity in Lansing. If you have any questions, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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